



## Maryanne Demasi, reports

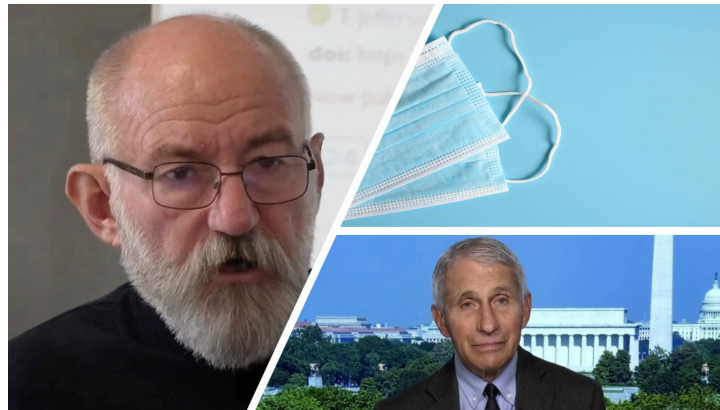
### EXCLUSIVE: Lead author of Cochrane mask review responds to Fauci's dismissal of evidence



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Former chief medical advisor to the US President Anthony Fauci, was [questioned](#) over the weekend by CNN reporter Michael Smerconish, about face masks being able to curb the spread of covid-19.

"There's no doubt that masks work," said Fauci.

"Different studies give different percentages of advantage of wearing it, but there's no doubt that the weight of the studies ... indicate the benefit of wearing masks," he added.

Smerconish brought up the [2023 Cochrane review](#) which found no evidence that physical interventions like face masks could stop viral transmission in the community and cited my [interview](#) with lead author of the study Tom Jefferson who confirmed, "There is just no evidence that they [masks] make any difference. Full stop."



Maryanne Demasi, reports

#### EXCLUSIVE: Lead author of new Cochrane review speaks out

Tom Jefferson, senior associate tutor at the University of Oxford, is the lead author of a recent Cochrane review that has 'gone viral' on social media and re-ignited one of the most divisive debates during the pandemic - face masks. The updated review titled ...

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Fauci replied, "Yeah but there are other studies," stressing that masks work on an individual basis.

"When you're talking about the effect on the epidemic or the pandemic as a whole, the data are less strong... but when you talk about an individual basis of someone protecting themselves or protecting themselves from spreading it to others, there's no doubt that there are many studies that show there is an advantage," said Fauci.

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Professor Tom Jefferson, who says he is committed to updating the Cochrane review as new evidence emerges, has responded to Fauci's comments.

"So, Fauci is saying that masks work for individuals but not at a population level? That simply doesn't make sense," said Jefferson.

"And he says there are 'other studies'... but what studies? He doesn't name them so I cannot interpret his remarks without knowing what he is referring to," he added.

Jefferson explains that the entire point of the Cochrane review was to systematically sift through all the available randomised data on physical interventions such as masks and determine what was useful and what was not.

Since 2011, the Cochrane review only included randomised trials to [minimise bias](#) from confounders.

"It might be that Fauci is relying on trash studies," said Jefferson. "Many of them are observational, some are cross-sectional, and some actually use modelling. That is not strong evidence."

"Once we excluded such low-quality studies from the review, we concluded there was no evidence that masks reduced transmission," he added.

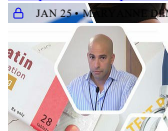
The problem with Fauci is that his story has changed.

Initially, Fauci said that masks were ineffective and unnecessary. In March 2020, Fauci [told](#) 60 minutes, "Right now in the United States, people should not be walking around with masks."

But only a few weeks later, he did a U-turn and began recommending widespread use of face masks.

Fauci defended his U-turn [saying](#), "When the facts change, I change my mind."

Jefferson retorted, "What facts changed? There were no randomised studies, no new evidence to justify his flip-flop. That's simply not true."



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